**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**H. 5349**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Rep. Erickson

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Introduced in the House on March 28, 2024

Currently residing in the House Committee on **Education and Public Works**

Summary: Palmetto Access to HigherEd (PATH) Act

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

3/28/2024 House Introduced and read first time ([House Journal‑page 11](h:\hj\20240328.docx))

3/28/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** ([House Journal‑page 11](h:\hj\20240328.docx))

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=5349&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/28/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/5349_20240328.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE “PAlmetto Access to highered (PATH) ACT” BY ADDING SECTION 59‑149‑17 SO AS TO ESTABLISH PATH SCHOLARSHIPS, TO PROVIDE THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS, TO PROVIDE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SCHOLARSHIPS, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMINOLOGY.

Whereas, access to an affordable education is of continued importance to the state, its citizens, and its businesses; and

Whereas, in a collaborative effort to improve higher education access and affordability, the South Carolina Technical College system, in cooperation with the state’s major research universities and other institutions of higher learning, recently reached an historic agreement easing the transfer process between two-and four-year institutions, thereby saving students time and money;

Whereas, however, some South Carolina Technical College and two-year college students nevertheless encounter financial limitations when lottery tuition assistance, workforce scholarships, and other scholarships do not carry over upon transfer to four‑year colleges and universities; and

Whereas, many students who transfer from public two‑year institutions have excellent grade point averages, but fall short of meeting the grade requirements to obtain or retain LIFE Scholarship eligibility, substantially reducing the affordability of attending a four‑year institution; and

Whereas, consequently, an additional scholarship source is necessary to help enable such transfer students to bridge the scholarship gap as they seek to attain first‑time eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship or regain lost eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the “Palmetto Access to HigherEd (PATH) Act”.

SECTION 2. Chapter 149, Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 59‑149‑17. (A) Palmetto Access to HigherEd (PATH) scholarship program is established and provided by the State to help students:

(1) as they transition from a two‑year institution to a four‑year institution in this State; and

(2) who are seeking to gain first‑time eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship or regain eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship after having previously achieved and subsequently lost such eligibility.

(B) The scholarship is provided to cover the cost of attendance up to a maximum of two thousand eight hundred dollars. The scholarship is available for no more than the one academic year (or two semesters if the transition is mid-year) during which the student transitions from a two‑year institution to a four‑year institution and is attempting to gain eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship.

(C) Eligibility for a PATH scholarship requires that a student:

(1) has earned an associate degree or at least thirty credit hours from a public two‑year institution in this State;

(2) successfully enrolls in a public four‑year institution in this State for at least twelve hours of academic credit as a full‑time student and earns at least thirty hours of academic credit by the end of the transition academic year or second consecutive semester if transition is mid-year; and

(3) must have achieved a grade point average of between 2.75 and 2.99 LIFE GPA at the two‑year institution prior to transitioning to the four‑year institution.

(D) For purposes of this chapter, “transition academic year” means the one academic year of full‑time enrollment in a four‑year institution immediately following transfer or transition from a two‑year institution, during which time a student is seeking to gain or regain LIFE Scholarship eligibility.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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